4: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

CHAPTER VI

THE MAN HIMSELF

Physique — Character

PHYSIQUE

142 144 In coastal British Columbia there are two types of Indian; one represented by the Carriers and Chilkotin of the interior, the other, by the coastal peoples. The first are relatively slight of build with graceful carriage, and thin, rather delicate-featured faces. The younger people, particularly, are lithe and handsome, resembling bronze statues. On the other hand, individuals of the second type are characterized by stocky, heavy physique, with thick-set, powerful bodies, muscular arms and legs; their faces have wide mouths and prominent cheek-bones and noses (see Plate 15). Undoubtedly the Bella Coola belong with these latter.[1] No measurements were taken to substantiate this statement, but the general affinities of the tribe are obvious. Stature, build, physiognomy, and especially that intangible impression of heaviness, unite to demonstrate even to one with slight knowledge of British Columbia Indians that he is dealing with a people who are predominantly of the coastal type. Of course there are individuals of the interior type, but they are decidedly in the minority (see Plates 14 and 15). The Bella Coola claim that they can [824] distinguish a coastal man from one of the interior people, and that every coastal tribe has its own peculiarities sufficiently distinct to be recognizable to anyone. Probably any Indian observer can make this fine distinction, though the difference between the two main types is clearly apparent.

142 145 Judged by white standards the Bella Coola are far from prepossessing in appearance. Even the children are plain and stolid, with little if any of the grace and appeal of childhood.

[1] Cf. Boas, p. 26.

2:McDougall E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

As they grow older the plainness of feature is more pronounced, accompanied by increasing heaviness of body (see Plate 16). Many of the adults are corpulent and move with slow, awkward gait. As a rule the men have great strength and are capable of prolonged and arduous exertion, particularly in paddling; in fact, constant use of canoes may have developed this powerful, ungainly build. Few are good walkers or parkers; such, if they are found, usually belong to the lighter interior type. Among the grown people the face, though unbeautiful, often has a kindly expression, even becoming attractive in laughter or when a friendly grin spreads from ear to ear. With advancing age the prominent nose seems to grow larger, frequently becoming almost aquiline (see Plate 17). Many of the older people assert that this was even more common in former times. In time the face becomes lined with wrinkles and the body appears to shrink (see Plate 18). The teeth are in many cases worn down to the gums; this seems to cause no discomfort, though an old person cannot utter the glottal stops and velar sounds with which the language abounds without emitting a fine spray of saliva. They are absolutely unable to pronounce several of the Bella Coola words, while the constant spitting is a disagreeable feature of their conversation, particularly as an investigator striving, often vainly, to record sounds accurately. The deep wrinkles of old women give them a benign "grandmotherly" expression, which makes them more attractive in extreme age than in youth (see Plate 19). Senile decay is so frequent that the return to infancy in mind as well as in physical powers is regarded as normal.

Among the coastal tribes hair on the face is not uncommon, but in this characteristic the Bella Coola are pre-eminent. [illegible] have a heavy growth, and several are full-bearded. That this was due to white mixture was assumed at first, but no evidence could be found to support this view. There are a number of half-breeds in the community but they are no more hirsute than the full-blooded Indians. Razors are now almost univer-